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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/707,111	11/06/2000	Susan Day	200-1618	8194

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Ford Global Technologies Inc  
Parklane Towers East  
Suite 600  
Dearborn, MI 48126-2490

EXAMINER
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REAGAN, JAMES A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3621

DATE MAILED: 08/19/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/707,111

Applicant(s)

DAY ET AL

Examiner

James A. Reagan

Art Unit

3621

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 July 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_.

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### **Status of Claims**

1. This action is in response to the amendment filed on 30 July 2004.
2. Claim 1 has been amended.
3. Claims 17 and 18 have been added.
4. Claims 1-18 have been examined.
5. The rejections of claims 1-16 have been altered.
6. The rejections of claims 17 and 18 are original.

### **Previous Claim Objections**

7. The Examiner thanks the Applicant for correcting the minor deficiencies within the claims. The objections are hereby rescinded.

## **RESPONSE TO ARGUMENTS**

8. Applicant's arguments received on have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Referring to the previous Office action, Examiner has cited relevant portions of the references as a means to illustrate the systems as taught by the prior art. As a means of providing further clarification as to what is taught by the references used in the first Office action, Examiner has expanded the teachings for comprehensibility while maintaining the same grounds of rejection of the claims, except as noted above in the section labeled "Status of Claims." This information is intended to assist in illuminating the teachings of the references while providing evidence that establishes further support for the rejections of the claims.

9. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

**Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103**

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 1, 2, and 4-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora et al. (US 6,161,113 A) in view of the Applicant's own admission, and further in view of Diamant et al. (US 5,530,861 A).

**Examiner's note:** Examiner has pointed out particular references contained in the prior art of record in the body of this action for the convenience of the Applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings in the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply. Applicant, in preparing the response, should consider fully the *entire* reference as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

**Claim 1:**

Mora, in column 1, lines 13-18 discloses, "*Collaboration software*, also referred to as *groupware*, is a type of computer software designed to enable workgroups and

individuals to collaborate and share knowledge regardless of geographic boundaries and time restrictions," essentially disclosing more than one disparate group collaborating on a project in a "virtual room" (such as is provided by Lotus Notes), and the limitation of *receiving from one member of the first members and the second members an issue document*. In at least column 6, lines 18-47, Mora discloses project document security, effectively disclosing *restricting dissemination of the issue document to the reviewer*. In addition, Mora discloses security features of a document such as who has access rights to edit a document, essentially disclosing *a list identifying potential reviewers for the issue*, (see at least column 7, lines 36-42). Security procedures concerning a document inherently disclose *identification of a reviewer for the issue* (see at least column 7, lines 36-42). Applicant, in the background of the specification discloses program and project management and collaboration tools such as Lotus Notes and Lotus Domino, the use of e-mail to send messages over a LAN, WAN, or through the Internet, using homepages and hyperlinks, separate organizations which are required to communicate over a distance with regard to a collaborative project, and security restrictions concerning access to corporate intranets. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Applicants own admission regarding the current collaborative project management environment with Mora's project management notebook because enhancing the structure and communication abilities of remotely located project teams across a range of distances allows groups to readily and efficiently share and approve related documents and issues, keeping projects on time and reducing wasted time and expense.

Neither Mora nor Applicant specifically disclose *automatically notifying the one member that the issue document has become dated after a first specified amount of time, or automatically archiving or deleting the issue document a second specified amount of time after the one member was notified that the issue document has become dated*. Diamant, however, in at least column 6, lines 37 to 66 discloses automatic archiving, and

in column 9, lines 27-35 discloses automatic deletion. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify Mora/Applicant with the common tasks of auto archive and delete because these project management techniques maintain document currency while minimizing the clutter of unused files.

**Claim 2:**

With regard to the limitations of:

- *receiving from the reviewer and escalation approval; and*
- *escalating the issue document to a management function;*

Mora, in column 10 lines 52-67, discloses senior executive review, essentially disclosing the hierarchical approval process, which send issues and documents to senior management after approval at the project manager level.

**Claims 4, 5, 6, and 7:**

With regard to the limitations of:

- *forwarding a notification to the reviewer;*
- *the notification comprises an electronic mail message;*
- *including in the notification a link to the issue document within the virtual team room;*
- *the link comprises a hypertext link,*

Mora, in at least column 24, lines 1-10, discloses notifications. The Applicant, as shown above, discloses email messages and hyperlinks. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to modify the Applicants own admission regarding email and hyperlinks with Mora's use of notifications because using an email message with an embedded link and/or hyperlink is an efficient way to send documents to reviewers, as well as providing a link to the work space in which the group meets and shares ideas and documents.

**Claim 8:**

With regard to the limitation of *the first members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a first network and the second members are linked to the virtual team room environment by a second network, disparate from the first network*, as shown above both the Applicant and Mora disclose project management environments i.e. Lotus Notes and groupware, as well as the Internet, corporate LANs, WANs, and intranets, and messaging, inherently disclosing that two separate groups may be linked to a common environment across separate and distinct networks.

**Claims 9-14:**

With regard to the limitations of:

- *the first network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network;*
- *the unsecured network comprises the Internet;*
- *the secure network comprises a local area network;*
- *the second network comprises one of a secure network and an unsecured network;*
- *the unsecured network comprises the Internet;*
- *the secure network comprises a local area network;*

The combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission as shown above discloses LANs, WANs, intranets, and the Internet. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose secured and unsecured networks, but the Applicant, in the background of the specification, discloses security restrictions that limit access to information management systems between organizations, naturally disclosing that each corporate entity maintains a secure and trusted network within its own organization. The Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the computer networking arts to establish a secure LAN or WAN in a corporate environment to prevent theft,

fraud, and abuse of sensitive corporate information. In addition, it is well known that the Internet in general is considered an unsecure network, with smaller secured networks contained within and adjacent to the Internet.

**Claim 15:**

With regard to the limitation of *the virtual team environment comprises a team work tool supported on a server*, as shown above both the Applicant and Mora disclose project management environments i.e. Lotus Notes and groupware, as well as the Internet, corporate LANs, WANs, and intranets, and messaging, essentially disclosing a computer server.

**Claim 16:**

With regard to the limitation of *providing a security server coupled to the virtual team environment and verifying the identity of the first and second members using the security server*, the combination of Mora with the Applicant's own admission as shown above discloses LANs, WANs, intranets, and the Internet. Mora/Applicant do not specifically disclose identity verification of team members, but the Applicant, in the background of the specification, discloses security restrictions that limit access to information management systems between organizations, naturally disclosing that each corporate entity maintains a secure and trusted network within its own organization. The Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the computer networking arts to establish a secure LAN or WAN in a corporate environment to prevent theft, fraud, and abuse of sensitive corporate information, as well as requiring the use of authentication procedures such as, for example, user ID's, passwords, and biometric verifications and authentications.



**Claims 17 and 18:**

The combination of Mora/Applicant/Diamant discloses project management tools and techniques already familiar and well-known in the project management arts. This combination does not specifically disclose:

- *automatically generating one or more assignments relating to an issue specified in the issue document;*
- *automatically communicating the one or more assignments to one or more team members associated with the issue;*
- *defining a team calendar for the virtual team room accessible by team members;*
- *wherein the team calendar includes one or more specified event;*
- *linking one or more news items to one or more of the specified events;*

However, Examiner takes **Official Notice** that it is old and well known in the project management software application arts to select and utilize a software tool such as, for example, Microsoft Project, which contain a Gantt-style chart and calendar for automatically scheduling and assigning tasks to team members, to facilitate project efficiency throughout during it's life cycle. As is known by those of ordinary skill in the art, Microsoft Project uses the state-of-the-art Microsoft Office Suite to schedule, plan, assign, and monitor projects in concert with email, word processing, and other well-known integrated office components.

With regard to the limitation of *upon a specified event passing, automatically deleting or archiving the one or more news items linked to the specified event which has passed*, see the rejection of claim 1 above.

12. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mora/Applicant/Diamant in view of Srinivasan (US 5,548,506 A).

**Claim 3:**

The combination of Mora/Applicant/Diamant discloses the collaborative project management environment as shown above. Mora/Applicant/Diamant do not specifically disclose *the potential reviewers comprise a leader of the virtual team room and a delegate of a leader of the virtual team room*. Srinivasan, however, in column 3, lines 6-8 and 30-32 discloses task leaders and project leaders, as well as a hierarchy of leadership positions in the program. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine Mora/Applicant/Diamant with Srinivasan because establishing various leadership positions within a project team delegates authority while ensuring that multiple tasks are completed on time on within other project constraints.

**Conclusion**

- 13.** Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).
- 14.** A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **James A. Reagan** whose telephone number is **(703) 306-9131**. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 9:30am-5:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **James Trammell** can be reached at (703) 305-9768.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the **Receptionist** whose telephone number is **(703) 305-3900**.

Any response to this action should be mailed to:

***Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks***

**Washington, D.C. 20231**

or faxed to:

**(703) 305-7687** [Official communications; including

After Final communications labeled "Box AF"]

**(703) 308-1396** [Informal/Draft communications, labeled "PROPOSED"  
or "DRAFT"]

Hand delivered responses should be brought to Crystal Park 5, 2451 Crystal Drive, Arlington, VA, 7<sup>th</sup> floor receptionist.

JAR  
11 August 2004

  
**JAMES P. TRAMMELL  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER  
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 3600**